

MARCH 6, 2023.

Hon. KEVIN MCCARTHY,
Speaker of the House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER MCCARTHY: Pursuant to Section 4(c) of House Resolution 5, 118th Congress, I am pleased to appoint the following Member to the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission to serve as the Democratic Co-chairman:

The Honorable James P. McGovern of Massachusetts.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

HAKEEM JEFFRIES,
Democratic Leader.

COMMUNICATION FROM FIELD
REPRESENTATIVE/CASEWORKER,
THE HONORABLE LINDA T.
SÁNCHEZ, MEMBER OF CON-
GRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from Jacob Wolak, Field Representative/Caseworker, the Honorable LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ, Member of Congress:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 16, 2023.

Hon. KEVIN MCCARTHY,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to notify you formally, pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, that I, Jacob Wolak, Field Representative/Caseworker for the Honorable Linda T. Sánchez, U.S. Representative for the 38th congressional district of California, have been served with a subpoena for testimony issued by the Superior Court of Los Angeles County, State of California.

After consultation with the Office of General Counsel, I have determined that compliance with the subpoena is consistent with the privileges and rights of the House.

Sincerely,

JACOB WOLAK,
Field Representative/Caseworker.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 19 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1703

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. FRY) at 5 o'clock and 3 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

REPAYMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE
ARMED FORCES FOR CONTRI-
BUTIONS TOWARD POST-9/11 EDU-
CATIONAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 502) to amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs repays members of the Armed Forces for certain contributions made by such members towards Post-9/11 Educational Assistance, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 502

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. REPAYMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE
ARMED FORCES FOR CONTRI-
BUTIONS TOWARD POST-9/11 EDU-
CATIONAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3327(f)(3) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “together” and all that follows through “(as applicable).”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on August 1, 2023.

SEC. 2. MODIFICATION OF CERTAIN HOUSING
LOAN FEES.

The loan fee table in section 3729(b)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “November 14, 2031” each place it appears and inserting “November 28, 2031”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 502, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Representative BANKS' bill, H.R. 502, as amended. I am pleased to support Representative BANKS' bill to ensure that all servicemembers who have paid into the GI Bill are properly repaid. This bill would close the financial loophole that prevents at least 25,000 Active-Duty servicemembers from receiving the repayments they are due.

Under current law, a servicemember who switches from Montgomery to the Post-9/11 GI Bill would lose \$1,200 that they paid into the program if they exhausted their benefits while still on Active Duty. Veterans who exhaust their benefits already receive the \$1,200 back.

Representative BANKS' bill would fix this policy to ensure that servicemem-

bers and veterans who are pursuing a higher education degree are treated equally.

Servicemembers have earned this benefit by protecting our country. They should not be short changed just because they are getting an education while still on Active Duty.

This bill would include a short-term extension of VA home loan funding fees to fully offset the cost of this bill.

I thank The American Legion for bringing this problem to our attention. I also thank Congressman BANKS for reintroducing this important bill that will make a big difference for thousands of Active-Duty servicemen and -women.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 502, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 502, as amended, legislation to ensure veterans can recoup the money they paid into the Montgomery GI Bill.

Under current law, veterans who do not fully access their Montgomery GI Bill can lose out on the payments they made into the program, in some cases totaling up to \$1,200.

The Montgomery GI Bill is in the process of being phased out for the more generous Forever GI Bill. Many veterans may not remember the \$1,200 they paid into the program in their early days of service or even be aware that they are entitled to a refund of the unused funds. The process to reclaim that \$1,200 can be difficult, and there are times when the veteran can simply lose out on the money because they waited too long.

This legislation eliminates that cumbersome process by making it so that the veteran is repaid, no questions asked.

The bill is fully offset, and it is supported by the veterans service organizations community, including by Student Veterans of America.

I thank Representative BANKS for his work on this legislation and the VSO community for bringing this issue to our committee. We were able to pass this legislation under the House last fall, but unfortunately, the Senate was unable to consider it. That is why I am thankful we can consider this bill early in 2023, giving our colleagues in the Senate plenty of time to complete it. No disrespect to the Senate, Mr. Speaker.

I urge the rest of my colleagues to support this legislation to ensure no veteran loses out on what is owed to them, and I certainly hope that Members of the House who aspire to be Senators will remember what it is like to be a House Member and make sure this never happens again.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BANKS), the sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. BANKS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding, and I appreciate his leadership on all issues related to our veterans in this great country. I appreciate the comments from the ranking member, as well, and his leadership of this committee over the last few years, too.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is simple. It closes an unintentional loophole in the law that hurts many of our Nation's veterans. It would equalize the treatment of servicemembers and veterans who paid into the Montgomery GI Bill, or the MGIB, but later used the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

Presently, veterans may choose between the MGIB and the Post-9/11 GI Bill, both of which help pay for their education.

The MGIB requires a \$100 monthly fee for the first 12 months of Active Duty. The quirk is that \$1,200 is then refunded to servicemembers only as an attachment to their housing allowance. For veterans who do not receive a housing allowance from the VA, they also haven't been receiving the \$1,200 that they are entitled to.

This is a complicated issue that no one ever intended to happen, but this bill closes the loophole by directing the VA to make the repayment before the servicemember exhausts their education assistance.

I appreciate the support for the bill. I hope that the people's House will pass it today so that we can fix this unintentional problem and do something important to help our veterans.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me to pass H.R. 502, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, once again, I encourage all Members to support this legislation. I also want to join with the ranking member in telling the Senate that this is a really good bill and that they should take it up right away. We want to encourage them to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 502, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CREATION OF ON-SITE TREATMENT SYSTEMS AFFORDING VETERANS IMPROVEMENTS AND NUMEROUS GENERAL SAFETY ENHANCEMENTS ACT

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 753) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to use on-site regu-

lated medical waste treatment systems at certain Department of Veterans Affairs facilities, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 753

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Department of Veterans Affairs Creation of On-Site Treatment Systems Affording Veterans Improvements and Numerous General Safety Enhancements Act" or the "VA COST SAVINGS Enhancements Act".

SEC. 2. USE OF ON-SITE REGULATED MEDICAL WASTE TREATMENT SYSTEMS AT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FACILITIES.

(a) IDENTIFICATION OF FACILITIES.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall identify Department of Veterans Affairs facilities that would benefit from cost savings associated with the use of an on-site regulated medical waste treatment system over a five-year period.

(b) REGULATED MEDICAL WASTE COST ANALYSIS MODEL.—For purposes of carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall develop a uniform regulated medical waste cost analysis model to be used to determine the cost savings associated with the use of an on-site regulated medical waste treatment system at Department facilities. Such model shall be designed to calculate savings based on—

(1) the cost of treating regulated medical waste at an off-site location under a contract with a non-Department entity; compared to

(2) the cost of treating regulated medical waste on-site, based on the equipment specification of treatment system manufacturers, with capital costs amortized over a ten-year period.

(c) INSTALLATION.—At each Department facility identified under subsection (a), the Secretary shall secure, install, and operate an on-site regulated medical waste treatment system.

(d) REGULATED MEDICAL WASTE DEFINED.—In this section, the term "regulated medical waste" has the meaning given such term under section 173.134(a)(5) of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, concerning regulated medical waste and infectious substances, or any successor regulation, except that, in the case of an applicable State law that is more expansive, the definition in the State law shall apply.

SEC. 3. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.

No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out the requirements of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 753, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 753, as amended, the VA COST SAVINGS Enhancements Act. I am proud to reintroduce this bill this Congress.

This bill will require the VA to conduct a medical waste cost analysis at VA medical centers nationwide. This would identify VA facilities where it would be more cost-effective to install waste incinerators on-site rather than contracting a third party to ship medical waste to be destroyed off-site.

Only around 20 percent of our VA facilities have a medical waste system installed. My bill would change that. In return, it will save VA tens of millions of dollars annually.

By supporting my bill, we would create a safer and cleaner environment at our VA hospitals. We would also be better stewards of taxpayers' dollars without diminishing services to our veterans.

Our Nation's veterans deserve the safest medical practices, and nothing, including waste management, should fall short of that. This bill is a win-win.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me today in support of H.R. 753, as amended, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1715

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 753, as amended, the VA COST SAVINGS Enhancements Act. This bill will require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to develop an analytical model to compare the costs of off-site versus on-site regulated medical waste treatment.

The VA will further be required to install on-site regulated medical waste treatment systems at VA facilities that would realize cost savings within a 5-year period.

Regulated medical waste is any type of waste generated by healthcare facilities that may be contaminated by blood, bodily fluids, or other potentially infectious materials. There are Federal and State requirements governing how it must be handled and how it may be transported given the infection transmission risks it poses.

On-site regulated medical waste sterilization systems would enable VA medical facilities to treat and compact this waste before it is transported off-site for disposal. There are potential cost savings associated with being able to sterilize and compact medical waste before it is taken off-site.

Trucking costs are higher for untreated medical waste because of all the precautions that must be taken to comply with applicable State and Federal regulations when transporting it, and because it takes more trucks to move the waste if it is not compacted first.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 753, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.